

Vol. CXCVI, No. 5,114

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Charivaria

ONE advantage emerges from the Italian conquest of Albania. It was so short that even a victorious general could hardly write a book about it.

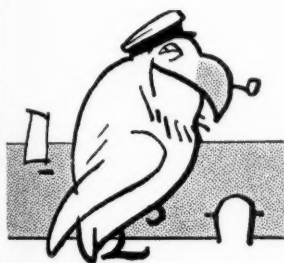
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"After the House of Commons rose to-day, Mr. Lloyd George saw Mr. Lloyd George."—*Daily Paper*.

It is understood that complete agreement was reached on all points.

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"Can the ordinary telephone be taken under the sea?" asks a correspondent in an evening paper. Certainly, so far as we are concerned.



"I can't understand why sailors should use stronger language than, say, gardeners or carpenters," says an essayist. Perhaps they pick it up from their parrots.

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We learn on good authority that there is no truth in the story that the Prime Minister, questioned by a member of the Opposition upon foreign affairs, told the gentleman to go to Halifax.

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"I think the main explanation of the size of the jolly crowds in Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, and Regent's Park was that everyone who could move at all was lured out of doors by the delightful conditions."—*Glasgow Herald*.

Steady now—no guessing.

A correspondent asks whether the policy of the Berlin-Rome alliance is to pinch everything to which they can gain axis.

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What to See This Week
"TORIES SPLITTING IN BATH."

Daily Worker.

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Referring to a star of a former generation, a critic asserts that he could act more with his little finger than the modern player can with his whole body. It is said that in a poignant emotional scene it was only necessary for him to bury his face in one hand.

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A naturalist describes baby storks as fascinating birds. It may come as a surprise to many people that storks have a family life of their own.

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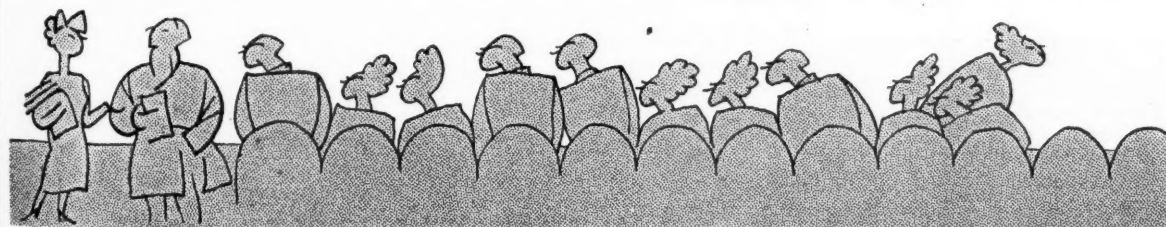
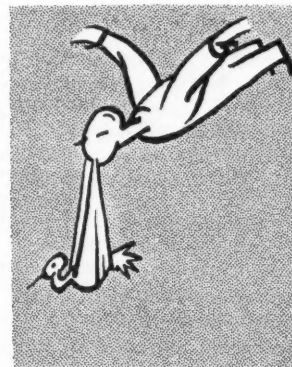
Big Game

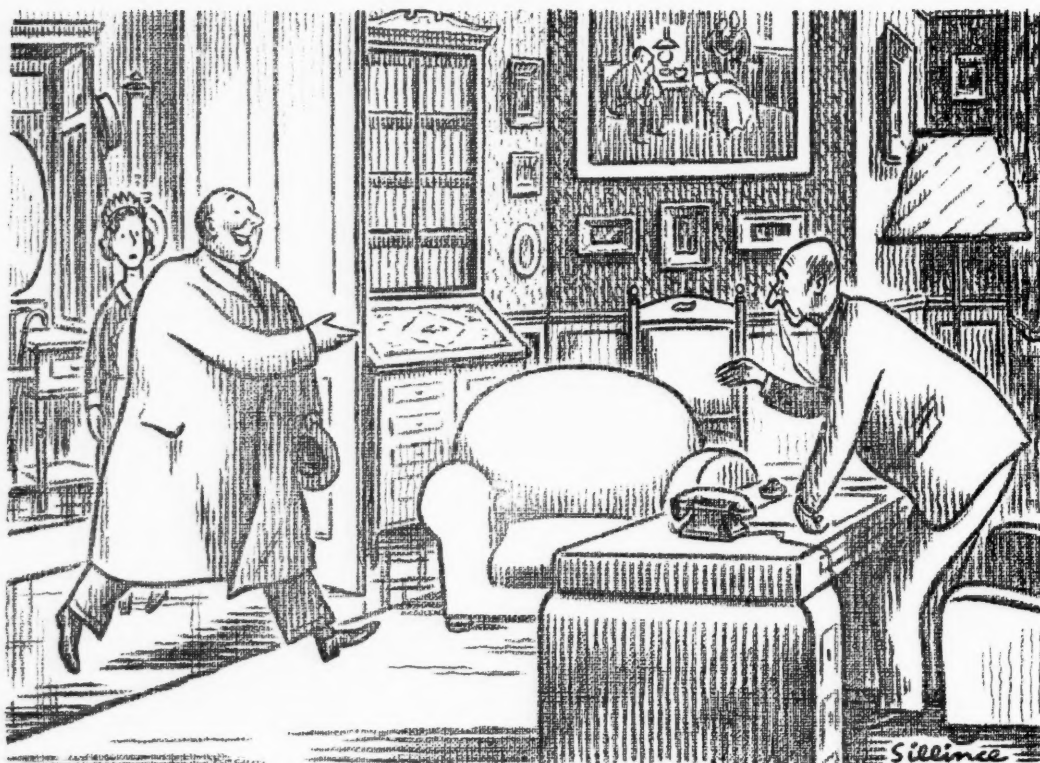
"The M-G-M director brought out a moose and caribou as souvenirs. Next year he hopes to bring Clark Gable with him, he said."

Vancouver Daily Province.

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Attention is drawn to the number of prominent people who arrive late at the theatre. That of course is their idea.





"Hullo—and how's the doctor this morning?"

State Secrets

WHAT we need in Gampford and what self-defence will undoubtedly cause us to form before very long is a patriotic organisation to prevent the disclosure of State secrets at private dinner-parties. It is intolerable that the shrewd and perspicacious men of Gampford should be free to reveal at every dinner-table the real intentions of the Cabinet and the most closely-guarded secrets of their dealings with foreign Powers. And besides that it is grossly unfair. Cabinet Ministers, after all, are paid to listen to this sort of stuff; whereas we, the unenlightened section of Gampford, have to listen to it for nothing. In fact very often we have to provide the port which sets off the voice of democracy in full cry. And a good deal of port at that. We have discovered that the most statesmanlike characteristic of the voice of democracy is its ability to go on and on and on and on.

Owners of the voice have sources of information denied to the rest of us. They know the real news, and for some reason that is just the sort of news that never gets into the newspapers. Some of them met a certain Dutchman who told them everything that was going to happen months beforehand. Others have been abroad and Seen Things for Themselves. And quite a few, apparently, have been hidden under the table during most of the Cabinet meetings of the past year. As you can imagine, we learn a lot from these experts in our midst; and yet sometimes we find ourselves sighing for the good old days when the worst that could happen at any dinner-party was that old Mrs. Roberts would start describing once again the burglary that took place at her house ten years ago.

It may be of course that Gampford is unique in this respect—we have no information as to what goes on in other towns. It may be that word has

gone round through those same secret and underground sources of information that Gampford is the real centre of political enlightenment and that all men of intelligence are rallying here to form the ideal city-state of the future. But the flaw in this reasoning lies in its assumption that one man with inside knowledge ever wants to meet another man similarly endowed. And that certainly has not been our experience. One expert, we have found, is an anæsthetic, two are a high explosive; and if we knew what the word meant we should say that imagination boggled at the thought of a whole dinner-table of experts, all thumping and banging and shouting at the same time. We have to conclude, therefore, that the gift of tongues has descended on other towns besides Gampford, and that other advanced thinkers beside ourselves have come to the conclusion that it is high time the gift were returned to store. And

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so we are hoping that there will be national support for our organisation.

It will demand a new Defence of the Realm Act inflicting severe penalties on those persons who reveal State secrets to anyone who can prove that he has no desire at all to hear State secrets. It will demand that anyone who is convicted shall reimburse his host for the port consumed during the process of revelation. It will demand that he is made responsible for replacing any of the domestic staff who give notice on the grounds that it ain't human to expect anyone to stay up half the night waiting to clear away in the dining-room. And in particularly stubborn cases the offender will be bound and gagged in a chair while a Government official with a slow, dry, monotonous voice gives his own views of the political history of the last five years together with lengthy explanations of how he comes to have special facilities for weighing-up the situation. If such treatment were adopted we do not despair of making the most hardened offender fit once more for human society.

In the meantime the beleaguered garrison of Gampford is being put to many desperate expedients to preserve its independence. We have, it is true, suffered many severe defeats. The enemy, entrenched at the dining-table and strongly fortified with port, has time and again reduced us to silence, sent over a heavy bombardment of secret information and finally lashed our wilting ranks with a withering hail of words. Nevertheless our moral is as yet unbroken, and we have even scored a few modest successes.

WE have resorted to chemical warfare in the belief that any port serves in a storm—particularly a liquid known as "Port Flavour," which has more than once caused the enemy to retreat from his emplacements in the hope of getting coffee, or anything else that will take the taste out of his mouth, in the next room. Occasionally we have counter-attacked with lies more boldly conceived than anything that he is able to produce. The pumping-station on the Continent for draining the North Sea, which we have seen with our own eyes, the plans for dismantling London and re-erecting it in South Africa, which a certain highly-placed person has assured us are now complete—these have the effect of confusing the enemy and perform much the same function as a smoke-screen in breaking off the action and allowing us to retire in good order. The avenue which we are now proposing to explore is the discovery that

the cook is in the pay of a foreign Power. We have reason to believe, we shall whisper confidentially, that microphones have been secretly installed somewhere in the dining-room, and that at this very moment the cook is taking down our conversation in shorthand. In the interests of public safety the important statement which our guest is about to make must be deferred until another occasion.

BUT all these, we realise, are only temporary measures. The day will come when the enemy can no longer be bluffed. "Ha, ha!" he will say mirthlessly, "you think you are pulling my leg, do you? But I happen to know that that idea is not so far-fetched as it sounds. The other day I was talking to a man who—"

And at that moment, if the brave new world has indeed dawned by then, the inspector from Scotland Yard will step from behind the curtains and make his arrest. "And I must warn

you," he will intone, "that nothing you say will be taken down or used in evidence. Now then, are you coming quietly, or must I tell you what they were saying at Ostend when I went there for my summer holidays two years ago?"

H. W. M.

I WISH I could be surer
That Der Fuehrer
Was merely letting off dampf
When he wrote *Mein Kampf*.

"If you are snookered after a foul—that is, if you can't hit the ball on both sides—you are entitled to a free ball. You can pot the ball you nominate you can play to pot the ball on with the nominated ball, or you can pot both balls—always provided you hit the ball nominated first or simultaneously with the ball on."—*Northern Paper*.

You understand—on.



"My dear! and what brought you here?"

The Axis

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."—*Alice Through the Looking-Glass.*

"For the Axis, as distinct from the old, possessing, nations, the conception of the *status quo* ceases to have any meaning if it excludes the possibility of adjustments corresponding with the growing strength and youthful vigour of the totalitarian States."—*A Berlin view of the Italian occupation of Albania according to a correspondent of "The Times."*

BLUE was the sky, they declared, on the day that it thundered.

The rivers ran upward, the foxes were eaten by geese.

There was only one thought in their hearts as they murdered and plundered—

They did it for peace.

And if you can hew down the forest before it is planted,

And if you can gather the grapes when the vineyard is bare,

They have spoken the truth. We shall listen again—as enchanted—

To all that they swear.

And those who resist them shall give them extreme provocation,

And those who resent being slain shall be makers of war

And the blast of their bombs be a justly-fulfilled aspiration

Once more . . . and once more . . .

Their mercy and grace shall go out to a desolate region,

Their armies shall loot with a pitying tear in the eye, Yet counting it gain that what well might have cost them a legion

Was won with a lie.

And the mud and the dust in the street shall be useful for cleaning,

And the fish from the ocean shall nest in the tree-tops like birds,

And the day shall arrive when, all words being robbed of all meaning,

We shall weary of words.

EVOE.

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Defeat of a Dun

A REPRESENTATIVE of Messrs. Short and Garlick, Builders and Decorators, called here to-day with some story about a sum of money owing to them for renovations carried out as recently as last February. I sent him away with a flea in his ear. I said:

"Kindly note that I gave instructions for the Exterior Decoration of this house at a time of considerable tension and unrest when public opinion was hardening against any policy involving expenditure on domestic structures whose permanence was, in view of the international situation, to say the least an uncertain quantity—in short at a time when householders hesitated to paint a lily which might at any moment be cut down by hostile action from the air. To speak plainly, the building and decorating business was

at a low ebb in February. By my public-spirited action I did much to set it on its feet. With a courage which even you, I fancy, can hardly fail to admire I shook my fist at the lowering political skies and gave instructions for the work to begin, thus setting a valuable example of calmness and confidence and directly encouraging Captain Sock and the Misses Colefish to have their greenhouses repaired."

"They had Frisby and Truncheon for them jobs," said the man.

"For this," I said, ignoring the interruption, "I receive not the grateful thanks I have every right to expect, but a sordid and, I may add, premature demand for money. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"We've got heavy charges for materials to meet and would take it as a favour—"

"You come here," I went on, "hammering on my door almost before the varnish has had time to dry, summoning me, as this piece of toast may go some way to convince you, at a most inconvenient moment and assailing with impudent demands for cash a mind already gravely battered by the first leader in *The Daily Telegraph*. No doubt you have called here at the ridiculous hour of half-past-ten in the morning with the deliberate intention of taking me at a disadvantage. You hope that a natural reluctance to be seen by my neighbours standing on my doorstep in a yellow dressing-gown and being dunned by a man with two if not more spots of green paint on his trousers will force me to terminate the interview in the speediest possible manner, viz., by a promise to pay. You never made a bigger mistake in your life. I tell you frankly I would gladly stand here for half-an-hour in pyjamas only—purple though they are, with lemon stripes, as you can see from the bottoms of the trouser-legs—rather than submit to this kind of barefaced blackmail."

"You've 'ad the work done and you ought to pay for it," he said.

I was absolutely thunderstruck by the man's attitude. "Well, really," I said, "if this is your idea of doing business I'm afraid it will be a long time before I put any more work in your way. Talk sense, man. How do you suppose people in my position are going to carry on if every trumpery little account—"

"Thirty-nine seven ten," he said, waving a piece of paper.

"Pah!" I said.

There was a short silence. It seemed to me, after what I had said, that the only course open to the fellow was to apologise and withdraw. But he made no move. Instead he said, "I'm sorry, Sir, but I must ask for settlement of this account by next Saturday at the latest."

I cannot stand this kind of talk. I suppose my nerves are bad or something—Doctor Barnes is always telling me to cut down my smoking a bit—but anyway I felt so upset and worried by the man's refusal to co-operate that I invited him into the sitting-room with the crazy notion forming in my head of paying his infernal bill and being done with it. But once we were inside a thought struck me.

"Look here," I said, "I've often meant to have a book-case built in between the window there and the fireplace, only I'm not sure—"

The man had his ruler out in an instant. "Six-foot-six," he muttered, putting it down in a little book, "and say three shelves with a ten-inch clearance, depth about the same, Sir, or a little less, the whole to be finished two coats best paint to match—"

"And make all good?" I suggested.

"And make all good—say two pound ten-and-six, or with Frampton's Extra Quality Varnishing—"



A PHOENIX!

The Franco-British Bird-Watchers. "This is something like a specimen."



"Ask him if he wants to see our passports."

"Never mind that," I said hastily. "Say two ten six, making in all a total of—"

"Forty-one eighteen and fourpence."

"The two accounts to be sent in together," I said, eyeing him closely.

"Very good, Sir."

"At a reasonable interval," I concluded, "after the completion of the work now to be taken in hand."

The man's eyes flickered, but he shut his book in a business-like way and put his pencil back behind his ear. "Thank you, Sir," he said. "I'll get a man on to the job this afternoon."

"There's no particular hurry," I said casually.

"May as well get on with it," he said, without any expression whatever, "while I've got a man free."

"All right," I said, "but I want the work carefully done, mind. No rushing."

He assured me that I should be more than satisfied with the result.

"I hope so," I said. "If I am there's the matter of a cupboard in my dressing-room I may get you to see to."

That shook him badly. He made a half-hearted attempt to quote me for it straight away, but I blocked him easily. "My coffee will be getting cold," I reminded him as I led him out. At the door he turned and made a bold attempt to cover up his chagrin. "Think there's going to be a war, Sir?" he asked conversationally.

"That's what I'm banking on," I said, and left him to his thoughts.

H. F. E.

The Rustic Retailer and the Elderly Gentleman

A RUSTIC Retailer was paying one of his annual visits to the Metropolis and walked into the premises of a Well-known Wholesaler. The Rustic Retailer was naturally quite accustomed by long experience of the City to the exercise of extreme tact and patience, and he was neither enraged nor surprised when no notice whatever was taken of him for the first half-hour. The warehouse appeared to be in its normal state of activity, with nobody about, very little stock in evidence, a great deal of dust and one or two benevolent-looking rats. The Rustic Retailer sat on the counter, twiddled his thumbs and waited. Eventually he heard footsteps and an Elderly Gentleman in a bowler-hat appeared on the scene and, approaching the Rustic Retailer, offered to escort him round the warehouse. The Rustic Retailer replied that it was really very kind of the Elderly Gentleman, but all he actually wanted just then was a gross of tape, and he scarcely thought a tour of the building was justified in the circumstances. The Elderly Gentleman looked rather surprised, informed the Rustic Retailer that the warehouse had been "To Let" for the past nine months, and said that he had taken the Rustic Retailer to be a prospective tenant.

Moral: MOVE WITH THE TIMES.

At the Pictures

BOMBING BEGINS

I DON'T see why it should be assumed that when a play adapted for the films is given a new "happy ending" all is well so long as the author himself did the adaptation. That is what Mr. ROBERT SHERWOOD has done to his *Idiot's Delight*, and though it makes the picture (Director: CLARENCE BROWN) more likely to appeal to vast audiences, it doesn't improve it artistically. NORMA SHEARER, CLARK GABLE, the famous title—wouldn't the audiences have been vast enough anyway, with the ending as it was?

Nobody can pretend, however, that this isn't excellent entertainment and very well done. There is also a half-hour prologue that was not in the play, establishing the early meeting in Omaha of *Harry Van* (Mr. GABLE) and *Irene* (Miss SHEARER), and for that anybody can be grateful. It may not be dramatically necessary, and indeed it throws away some of the curiosity with which we should otherwise regard *Irene* at her first appearance in the Alpine hotel, but it is amusing, well acted and directed, and not out of key.

It might be more out of key if the rest of the play were intact; but as you have probably read, the anti-war stuff has been toned down. Besides being careful not to offend any particular country by the use of its language (the soldiers here speak Esperanto), the film-makers have also decided not to imply too bitter disapproval of something that an ever-increasing portion of the world, it seems, is being taught by its leaders to regard as good.

Excellent entertainment, I repeat. The galaxy of talent involved includes also EDWARD ARNOLD (in a thoroughly unsympathetic part, for a change), JOSEPH SCHILDKRAUT and BURGESS MEREDITH. It won't by any means take your mind completely off war, but it should distract and amuse you and show you how the bombs always just miss the people you like. (That's the new ending; just a slight mechanical adjustment, after all.)

The star to take your mind completely off gloomy realities is, as

always, DEANNA DURBIN. There seems to be a prevailing opinion that her new film, *Three Smart Girls Grow Up* (Director: HENRY KOSTER), is her best; but I wouldn't say that. The stories she is given, as I hinted in my notes

sisters' love-affairs to the general satisfaction. The most endearing character, apart from her, is her father, *Judson Craig*, a wolf in Wall Street but a lamb at home. CHARLES WINNINGER, given little more than the usual conventions of absent-mindedness to work on, succeeds in making him credible and funny.

Made for Each Other (Director: JOHN CROMWELL) is what is sometimes called a "domestic comedy-drama" on to which a suspense-climax utterly out of tune with it has been grafted at the instance (I imagine) of someone who thought it needed a stronger ending. Both parts are good of their kind, but they don't belong together. The real story is of a young married couple (CAROLE LOMBARD and JAMES STEWART), their baby, and their difficulties: hers at home with his disapproving mother (LUCILE WATSON), his at the office with his deaf boss (CHARLES COBURN). The picture suddenly becomes a thriller towards the end, with a brave airman battling through snowstorms in an old plane with serum to save the baby's life. (Guess whether he arrives in time.)

It is all well and credibly done, but I must say I prefer Miss LOMBARD in flippant parts, which she probably does better than anyone else.

Inspector Hornleigh (Director: EUGENE FORDE) is quite good: much better than most other British crime films. GORDON HARKER with a subdued accent may not be your idea of the famous Inspector, but if that bothers you, simply disregard the name. ALASTAIR SIM is richly amusing as *Sergeant Bingham*, and among the other good performers are STEVE GERAY and GIBB McLAUGHLIN. The story involves three murders; the main idea, however, is the charming one of the theft of the Chancellor's Budget bag . . . *Fast and Loose* (Director: EDWIN L. MARIN) is an enjoyable and funny "whodunit," a sequel to *Fast Company* but with different players—except for DONALD

DOUGLAS as the police detective, and just to mix everything thoroughly he is supposed to be a different detective this time. *Thin Man* stuff, with ROBERT MONTGOMERY and ROSALIND RUSSELL and much amusing dialogue. I liked it. R. M.



A VODKA CHAT

Harry Van CLARK GABLE
Irene NORMA SHEARER

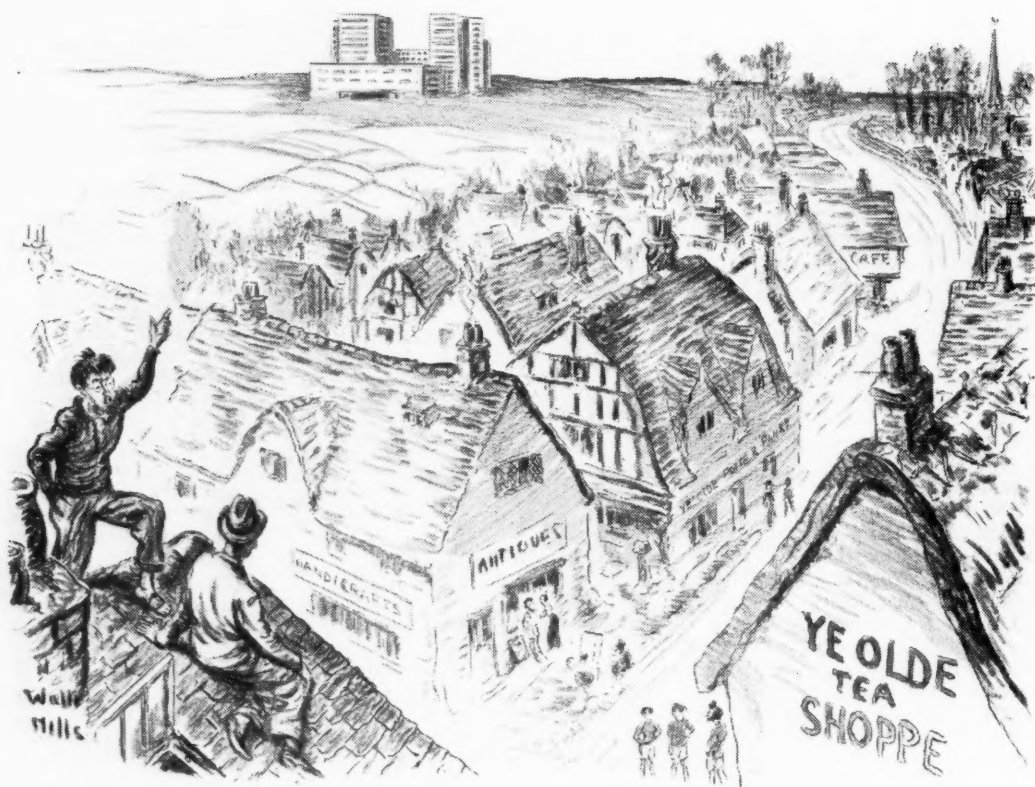
about the last one, tend to seem more and more consciously charming, more and more full of school-girl innocence as synthesised by adults. In a way this doesn't matter; she can carry off anything; nevertheless some slight astringency would, at intervals, be welcome.



A CHICKEN CHAT

John Mason JAMES STEWART
Jane Mason CAROLE LOMBARD

Here there is no astringency at all. Every character is Nice; the most that can be said is that one or two of them are a bit misguided. Penny (Miss DURBIN), however, knows what is best for everybody, and after a slight setback to begin with sorts out her two



"Ob, the villagers? They live in those flats."

"That's the Way it Was."

A BAD train connection forced me to spend several hours in a small Irish town which was made rather more depressing than it might normally have appeared by a layer of dirty snow covering the ground. After sauntering about for ten minutes, trying to find some feature of interest in the place and look as if I had something better to do than waste time, I concluded that the only thing which could soothe my temper was a pipe; but finding that I had no tobacco on me, I went into a respectable-looking tobacconist's shop nearby. A man with bright-red hair was sitting on the counter trying to tie up a small kitten in a parcel of newspaper. He looked up when I came in, but otherwise made no further acknowledgment of my presence.

"Good morning," I said. "Nice day

for the weather. I don't think it's quite so cold now, do you? The snow seems to be thawing a bit."

"An' how wad I be afther knowin' that," he retorted, "whin I've not set fut beyont me dure this last five minnits?"

There was no possible answer to this, so I thought it best to get down to business at once and told him that I wanted some tobacco.

"Tobacco is it?" he said. "D'ye know I haven't any tobacco in me shop at all?"

"No tobacco!" I exclaimed. "Well what are you trying to tie that kitten up in a parcel for then?"

"Och, the kitten is it?" he replied. "Will ye be afther wantin' a drop to ate now?"

I told him that that was exactly what I did want, and he was gal-

vanised at once into activity and a surprising display of friendliness.

"Come ye inside, man, an' I'll set ye down to a rare fine dinner an' tell ye the tale of me cat into the bargain."

He took me into a small room at the back of the shop, where I found the table already laid, and—"Kathie," he called into a dark recess which I took to be the kitchen, "bring in the dinner, me sweet child; there's a gintleman come to share it. Faith, Mr. MacWump, Sir—for I did not catch yer name at all, an' if I had I wad not have remembered it—ye'd not get a better meal if 'twas in Buckin'ham Palace served be the Lord Chancellor himself. Ye'll not get a better meal for all the jools in Wesminsther Abbey. 'Twill cost ye four shillin's."

It has always been one of my secret ambitions to catch someone trying to

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put a fast one over on me. I have often pictured to myself the scene in which I should draw myself up and wither the offender with a glare; and I realised that at last the great moment had arrived. Coolly and deliberately I took my hands from my pockets, pointed an accusing finger at the grinning shop-keeper, drew myself up to my full height and bumped my head on the ceiling.

THERE was a choice of lobster and stew for lunch. I chose stew and the shopman said he would have a little lobster first, please. I was surprised at this moderation till he added, "And then I'll have some more afterwards." During the whole of that meal he kept up what was pretty well a monologue. It needed little prompting to keep him talking.

"Have ye iver slep' in a haunted house?" he asked. "I slep' in a haunted house wan night an' me hair turned red. 'Twas black as the devil himself whin I was born, but I slep' in a haunted house wan night an' it turned red wid the shame of it. For I wint into the front-room an' I see two people kissin' be the winda. Is it was they ghosts? They was not, then. An' how do I know it? For if they was ghosts I could have walked through them like the wind through the corn. I tried to do it an', begob, me chin grows sore at the relection of it. An' that's the way it was.

"But I'll tell ye another story. 'Twas wan dark night I turns over in me bed. 'Twas the music in me drames as wake me, an' I tosses an' turns to try can I slape agin, till all the blankets fell off of me an' tumbled to the flure. But the music wad not be gone from me an' still went on playin', till I thinks to meself, Can it be me drames or is it the ould pianner playin' downstairs? Wid that I puts on me coat an' crapes out the room, quite as a fairy treadin' in velvet shoes on the petals of a rose at the mid of an autumn's night. I crapes down the stairs an' into the big room that looks out over the sea. 'Twas a bright moon that night, an' it glidin' over the waves an' in the winda like a stream o' silver. An' there sittin' on the shtool, as swate an' tinder as a wather-lily openin' out in the peep o' dawn, black against the moonlight wid the silver beams upon her hair, I see a lady's form playin' at the ould pianner, an' me heart stopped dead wid the wonder an' the love an' the fear of it, till I see 'twas me sister Jane, an' her playin' like it was a blessed angel from hiven."

"Was the pianner in chune, Dennis?" asked his wife in a soft

voice. This was her only contribution to the meal's talk and he took the interruption in his stride.

"Sure the sound of it was pure as golden suvrins chinkin' in the till. 'What is it at all?' I says to her. 'Are ye dead or mad? Go you off to bed, me darlin', afore ye get frozen stiff as an imidge wid the cold.' 'Oh, Dennis,' she says to me, 'tis the music in me heart,' she says, 'cryin' out all the night to me to be played, an' I had not the stringth to keep it down,' she says. 'The chords was cryin' out inside me to be played an' 'twad be like murther to keep 'em down.' Wid that I takes her be the arm an' leads her out the room. 'Come,' says I, 'off to bed wid ye an' slape ye quite, me child. 'Tis not the chords ye do be afther murtherin', 'tis yerself.' An' niver a word she says to me, but goes off peaceable to bed, an' dape we slep' the both of us that night.

"But the chords was iver at the back of her heart, an' ivery night down she wad go to the ould pianner an' I'd hear the chunes come driftin' up to me like the strains of a beautiful lady breathin' words o' love into me ear, till I found I could not slape widout 'em at all. An' so it was for a many weeks, till I woke up wan dark night; an' I tosses an' turns in me bed to try can I slape agin that way, till all the blankets tumbles off me on to the flure in a heap. 'Well, what is this at all?' I says to meself. 'What is this that I cannot slape?' Then I listens an' hears not a sound but the silence bristlin' all around me. 'Tis the music has gone an' left me alone,' I says to meself, 'an' I cannot slape widout it.' Wid that I puts on me coat an' crapes out the room quite an' quick as a flame playin' in the fire. I crapes down the stairs through the dark alone an' puts me hand on the handle o' the dure o' the big room. Sure 'twas cold to me touch an' give me a rare start. But I turned it an' opes the dure, an' as I oped it I

see a big black shape slip across the hall behind me. Was it a bogey? It was not then. . . . 'Twas me own shadow. I looks into the room an' there beyont the winda was the light o' the moon flashin' an' plashin' on the waves an' the trees wavin' all dark an' wriggly in the wind. But inside the room the shtool was empty, wid the moonlight silver on it, an' niver a sound came from the ould pianner."

Here he made a pause which I took at first to be the dramatic pause of a consummate artist. But as, after I had waited a little, he showed no signs of going on, I asked impatiently what had happened to her.

"To me sister?" said he. "Och, she was married an' had sivin childer."

I WAS just about to protest at this abrupt and unsatisfactory conclusion, when there was a sound of tearing paper followed by a bump and a wild shriek. "'Tis me cat, me poor cat!" exclaimed the man. He leapt to his feet and hurried to the door, opened it and peered through, then shut it abruptly, set his back against it and fixed me with a stern and malevolent glare. "'Tis a fit she do be afther throwin', the crature," he said. "Round an' round she wint like the devil an' all the saints was at her tail. They do be sayin', Mr. MacWag, that 'tis a quare an' evil prisince in the house as sends a young cat wild, an' 'tis you that'll be wishful to make yer escape afore the Ould Wan himself comes up behint to tap good-day upon yer shoulder, an' 'tis the winda will be yer quickest way. For be the bones of the holy St. Patrick 'tis not two skips of a louse I'd give for me life whin a cat does be runnin' wild at me in a strange house."

The conviction in his voice was not to be gainsaid. I quickly gave him five shillings and seized up my coat. My exit was undignified. He tried to close the window before I was properly through and caught my rear foot fast. He released it before I had recovered my balance and I fell headlong. And as I grovelled there in the snow I heard him utter his final benediction: "May the blessin' o' the Lord foller ye all the days o' yer life—an' may it never catch up wid ye."



"Oh, for lunch, was it?"

Spring in the Village

Old elms; new lambs that stumble and strut

On legs that quickly tire,
So crudely from pipe-cleaners cut
The wool scarce hides the wire.

Spring, 1939

THE daffodil is bowing to the sun,
 The lambs and larks
 Make seasonal remarks,
 Nature is having some tremendous fun,
 And little Man
 Is doing what he can.
 The secret glade
 Is clothed in tender green,
 And there is made
 Trinitrotoluene.
 I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 For I am learning semaphore again;
 And how to decontaminate a street:
 Which gases are a bore, and which a bane;
 And many a thing
 That suits the present Spring.

Be of good cheer—
 Is not the tulip here,
 Fair phosgene too, in bloom,
 A "non-persistent" fume
 Smelling of hay,
 Unlike sweet ethyl-iodoacetate
 (Or K.S.K.),
 Which smells of peardrops,
 And will not go away?

Sing, all you happy birds,
 Building your nests
 With paste and paper,
 As the book suggests.
 Do not forget
 To keep your blankets wet
 Over the porch,
 And have at hand
 Shovel and sand,
 A screen for privacy,
 Electric torch,
 Hammer and nails
 To mend your tiny jails.
 For now is Nature mounting to her peak,
 And Man, maybe, will do his worst this week.

So, all you creatures
 On hill and plain
 Who perceive the features
 Of Spring again,
 Embracing thrushes,
 Maternal trees,
 Rats in the rushes,
 Amorous bees,
 In your high toils continue, all,
 But if you please
 Recall—
 There are four main kinds of gases
 Which may be used upon the masses,
 The sternutators
 (Arsenical "smokes"),
 The lachrymators
 (Comparatively jokes),
 The asphyxians
 (Or broncho-twisters),
 The vesicants
 (Or blisters).

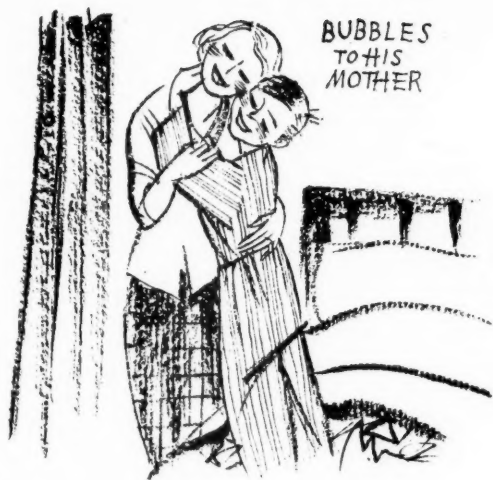
Blackbird and lark,
 Stand by!
 Loving in the dark,
 Singing in the sky,
 Climbing the clouds on your unconquered
 wings,
 Distinguish clearly these disgusting things—
 The lachrymators
 Are eye-irritators,
 The sternutators
 Are nose-irritators;
 But all will be well,
 As far as we can tell,
 If you carry on
 In your little respirators.
 So go on singing,
 Building the nest
 Or whatever it is,
 And hope for the best.

But when we turn, as Britons do,
 To the high seas and oceans blue,
 There is cause for even greater satisfaction;
 Spring kindles in the waters too;
 The sole his sole-mate doth pursue,
 And cod for cod confess a warm attraction.
 Nor shall these lovers halt
 For chemical assault,
 Young haddock still shall woo the salmon's
 daughter;
 Wherever Hitler goes
 There shall be plenteous roes,
 For *Lewisite's* at once destroyed by water.

Sing, then, O fish!
 Do what you wish,
 Alone of living things immune,
 Though, I admit,
 A direct hit,
 Might cause a change of tune,
 And frog, the fond,
 Whose nose he pokes
 Out of the pond
 With happy croaks,
 Had better sink
 With his dear mate below
 For he can not be touched, I think,
 By chloroviny! dichlorarsine so.

Sing, sing, the Spring!
 Sweet hour of eglantine,
 And every lovely thing,
 A blessed round
 Of scent and sound,
 Chloracetophenone,
 Shy chloropicrin, diphenylamine,
 And chemists on the wing.
 Strong shine the sun on lover and on
 lass,
 Or else continual torrents wet the twain!
 For warm bright weather is not good
 for gas;
 Nor, on the other hand, is heavy rain.

A. P. H.



BUBBLES
TO HIS
MOTHER



BOB
TO HIS
FATHER



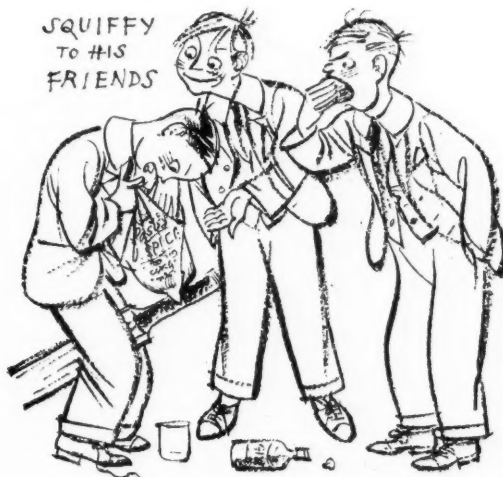
PIG
TO HIS
SISTER



ROBERT
TO HIS
AUNTS



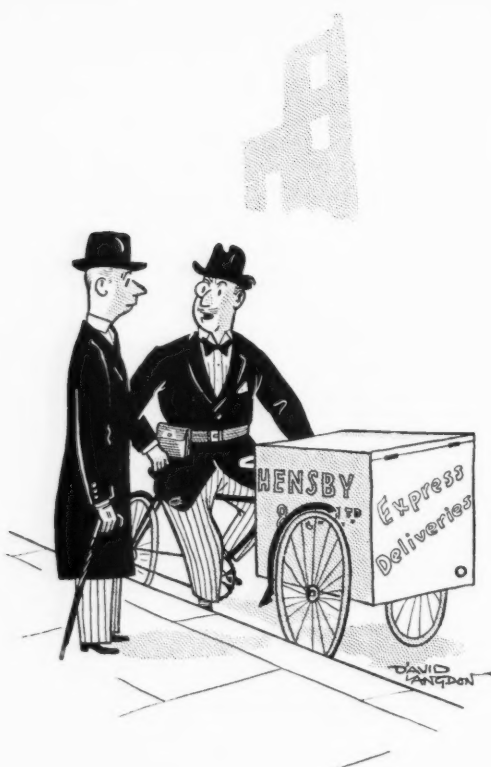
SMITH
TO HIS
FORM MASTER



SQUIFFY
TO HIS
FRIENDS

A MAN OF PARTS

THOMAS
DERRICK



"I've had flu epidemics among my staff before, but never anything as bad as this last one."

In Balkania Now . . .

"IN England, I think," said Captain Romanescu, "you hev Ministry of Health. Yes? In Balkania now also. Sure. It is called Ministry for Sickness, bot it is the semm. It is very good, I think—mekk Balkania moch like England, big advance for democracy. It is very interesting."

"It is like this. In Balkania since four-five years there is many Jews come from Germany and so on. There is one friend of mine, Heinrich Goldberg from Munich, is now rich merchant in Borella. Soon after he comm to Balkania he spikk to me one day:

"I am very worrying, Romanescu, for somm Nazi leaders in Munich. They burn my shop, they beat my wife, they steal all my monny till I escepp. How can I forget? Now when I read in the Talmud in somm place there is all this about an eye for a tooth, kick him in the face and so on. Other place it say, vengeance is mine, forgive the enemies. This is moch better, I think. So now I have forgive all this Nazi leaders very moch."

"I say to Goldberg: 'What the damn! This is very fonny. How is there somm profit in this?'

"Goldberg say: 'You do not understand. This is not for business. It is for nice feeling in here for doing good. So now every week I post letters to this Nazi leaders in

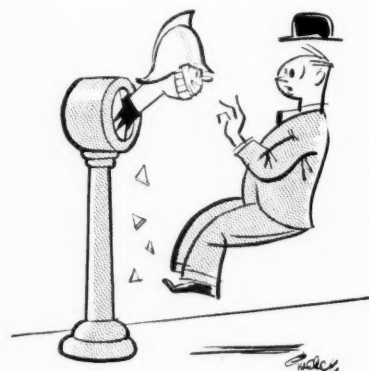
English, thank them for helping me so moch to escepp and for all the informations they send to poor Jew like me. This forgiving like so it is moch better, I think.'

"Soon, maybe in six months, sommone comm from Germany to see Goldberg, tell him all this nonsense most stop. They hev open and read all his letters, so they hev bomp off three very good Nazi leaders in Munich, but when he write soch letters to Goering they know it is nonsense, because Goering will not help so smoll a Jew like him. Goldberg say, Very well, pastime can be pastime, he will not forgive any more; but now he is Balkanian subject, merchant in Borella, what about somm business with Germany? Maybe he can sell somm lead-ore or oil or soch for very low price."

"Goldberg is very good business-man and soon he fix it op with Germany and Balkanian government to send moch oil and ore to Germany and Germany will send for exchange plenty machineries for shipyard and arsenal, with commission for Goldberg, and it is very nice. After a long time this German machineries does not come and they ask Balkanian Minister in Berlin to spikk to Nazi government. Nazi government say this is a pity because there is new law in Germany now they cannot export soch machineries. Bot it is all right, they will send esperins instead for full value plos ten per cent., because Nazi government is very honest, always most pay all the debts very full."

"Next week the Nazi ship full cargo of esperins to Balkania. Minister of Finance is very clever man, he count op and say there is five-six thousand esperins for everyone in Balkania. This mekk Prime Minister very medd, because he hev mekk smoll company with Goldberg to sell all this German machineries to proper departments in Balkanian government. Bot Goldberg say, Never mind, maybe it is also good. Balkania is big modern contry and it is shemful there is no Minister for Sickness like in England. This esperins is very good for heddeck and all sickness. If there is Minister for Sickness now this esperins is very useful for him; so they mekk new decree there most be Minister for Sickness, and everyone's most buy one hondred esperins every month for three tekani per hondred. By so there most not be so moch sickness and heddecks for the peoples like proper democracy."

"Nazi government say they hev count op and there is still two more shipload of esperin they will send very soon, because Nazi government is very upright and most always



"Yes—where is it?"

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pay the debt. Balkania say, No, thenk very moch, there is no rooms for more esperin, bot maybe Nazi government can pay with sommthing else like monny or soch. Nazi government say there is very strong law against this paying the monny like democrat contry, bot maybe Balkania will like five thousand kesses of pepper flowers and four million mout organs.

"Soon I think we hev in Balkania Ministry for Fine Art for the music and the penting and maybe for soch thing as pepper flowers to mekk all the houses very pretty.

"Will you hev two-three esperin? No? It is very good after this drinking. In Balkania now it is very popular."

A. M. C.

Civil Air Guard

II.—Dual

MY instructor sits beside me in the aeroplane. He looks resigned and a little cynical, like a man who is about to witness a display of ineptitude. I myself attempt to look confident and determined, like a man who is about to make a success of an undertaking. The undertaking is to take off, to make a circuit of the aerodrome and to land. When I think about it in bed this seems quite simple—merely a matter of climbing to four hundred feet, turning left across wind, turning left again down wind, turning left for the third time and gliding across wind, and finally turning into wind and landing gently on the aerodrome.

In bed I can do this with a precision which compels the admiration of all onlookers, but now that I am actually in the aeroplane I feel less confident. I look out in front of me and notice uneasily that the aerodrome seems to have decreased markedly in size and that the trees over which I must climb have shot up to twice their usual height. My own body has grown alarmingly large. The feet which I place on the rudder-bars have become huge and clumsy and the hand which grips the stick feels enormous and inexpert. With a growing consciousness of these disabilities I open the throttle, taxi heavily towards the lee boundary and start to turn into wind. In bed this is a simple, if ungraceful, manœuvre, but on this occasion I leave the rudder on too long and the aeroplane turns round rapidly twice and comes to rest facing the wrong way. I am crestfallen and my instructor raises his eyebrows. He says nothing but his silence has an eloquence which makes my ears tingle. I creep round contritely into wind and we take off. As the ground recedes and the trees sink impotently below us I begin to feel better. I glance at my instructor, hoping that his face may have softened. But the eye of my instructor is fixed upon the air-speed indicator, and it is the eye of a man who observes something with growing concern. I follow his gaze and realise with a shock that I am climbing too steeply. In a moment the aeroplane will lose its flying-speed and we shall plunge into the ground. I hastily climb less steeply and find that the aeroplane has taken advantage of this distraction to indulge its penchant for swinging to the right. By the time I have got it straight again we have reached four hundred feet and it is time to turn left. I turn left and fly over the fields to the south of the aerodrome. I turn left again and fly over the factory to the east of the aerodrome. I appear to have made no mistakes and I begin to feel rather elated. As I turn to glide over the houses to the north of the aerodrome I glance at my instructor. He seems not to share my elation. His expression is resigned and his eye is fixed coldly on the altimeter.

I follow his gaze and I see that we are no longer flying at four hundred feet. I have forgotten to stop climbing and we are approaching the aerodrome at something over a thousand feet, from which height it will be impossible to land.

I am much mortified. We try again.

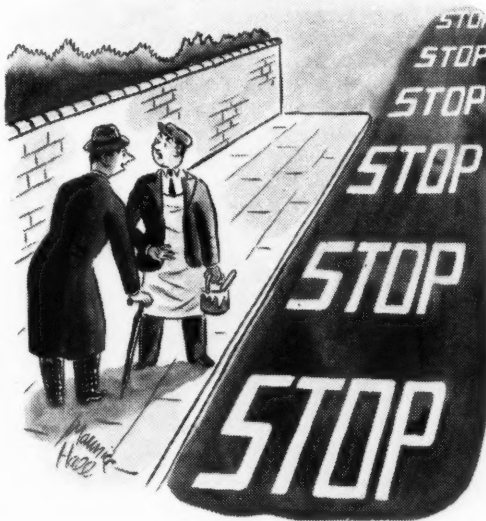
This time I am determined to fly level. I devote my whole attention to the task, but when I turn to glide over the houses to the north of the aerodrome I find that although I have flown level I have inadvertently flown too far. Instead of being four hundred yards from the boundary I am about three-quarters-of-a-mile and will land in somebody's back-yard. I open the throttle and the engine gives a roar of contempt.

I am now utterly discouraged. I bitterly regret my impulse to learn to fly. My instructor's face is still patient but I know that he despises me and as I fly round for the third time I am filled with rage and despair. I make my third circuit and once more I am gliding over the houses. This time I am at the right height and the right distance. I turn into the aerodrome over the row of trees. The tops of the trees seem alarmingly near. I feel that they are going to tickle my feet and I instinctively curl up my toes. Thank heavens we are safely past the trees! The surface of the aerodrome is inexorably rising up to meet us. If I do not flatten out at once we shall glide straight into the ground. I flatten out but the instructor is not pleased.

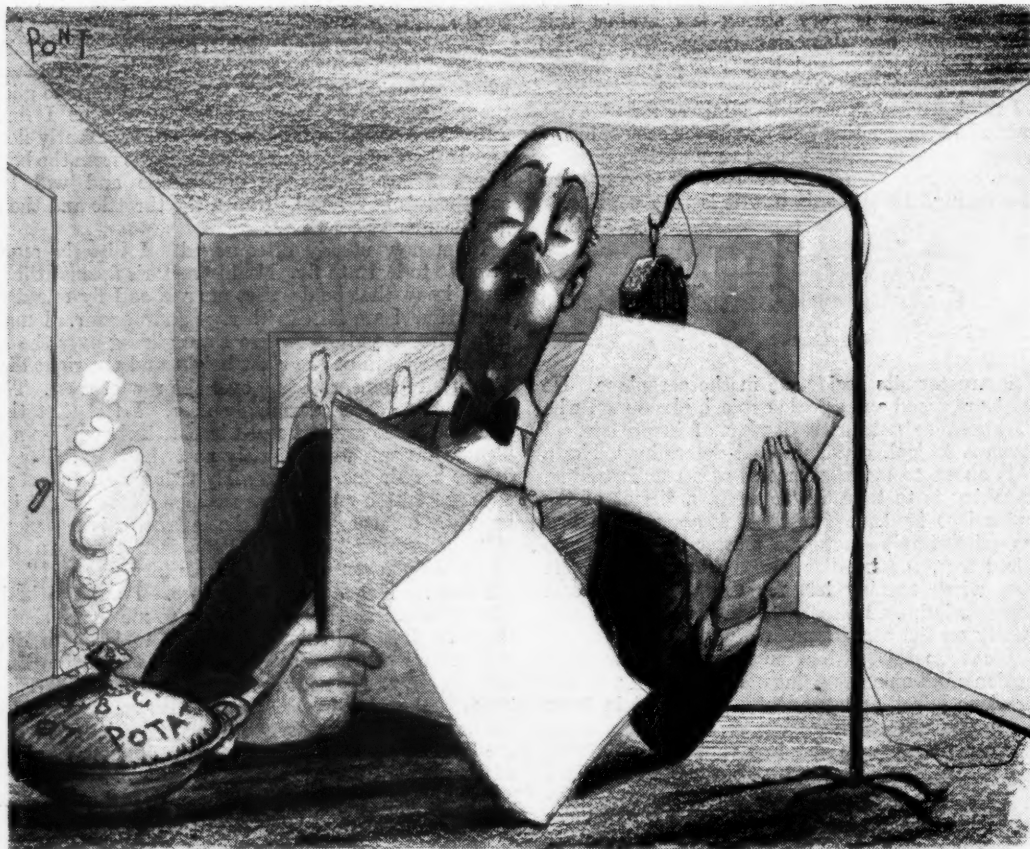
"I've got her," he says with a sort of resigned despair. "How do you expect to land from fifty feet up?"

I am no longer filled with rage. I am apathetic and without ambition. It is now clear to me that I shall never learn to fly. I do not even want to learn to fly. My instructor lands the aeroplane and I watch him listlessly, without envy. I get out of the machine and walk dejectedly towards the club-house. My instructor walks with me. He seems to be pondering. Doubtless he is considering the best way of telling me that I shall never be any good. At the door of the club-house he pauses.

"Well," he says casually, "you're getting on. Another couple of lessons and you ought to be going solo."



"Some fool went by in a steam-roller."



POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS—A LONDON ANNOUNCER

Cherry—A Cow

FROM causes I may not divine
To sing of cows is oft my wont;
Not that I care o'ermuch for kine,
Because I don't.

And that strange passion drives me
now

To celebrate one Cherry, who
Has been acclaimed a record cow
The wide Press through.

Not for the blandness of her eyes
Nor for a coat resembling silk;
Just now I merely emphasise
Her wealth of milk.

Eleven gallons odd per day,
Believe me: pails on pails succeed

Unfaltering; one may soothly say
Some cow indeed.

And, mark you, not this day or that,
But through the year's unbroken
moons;

Her output, too, is rich in fat
And other boons.

And, cows, who roam the meadows
o'er

And render in habitual use
With calm content your modest store
Of cattle-juice,

Oft, when the shades of evening steal,
I have observed your homeward
slope.

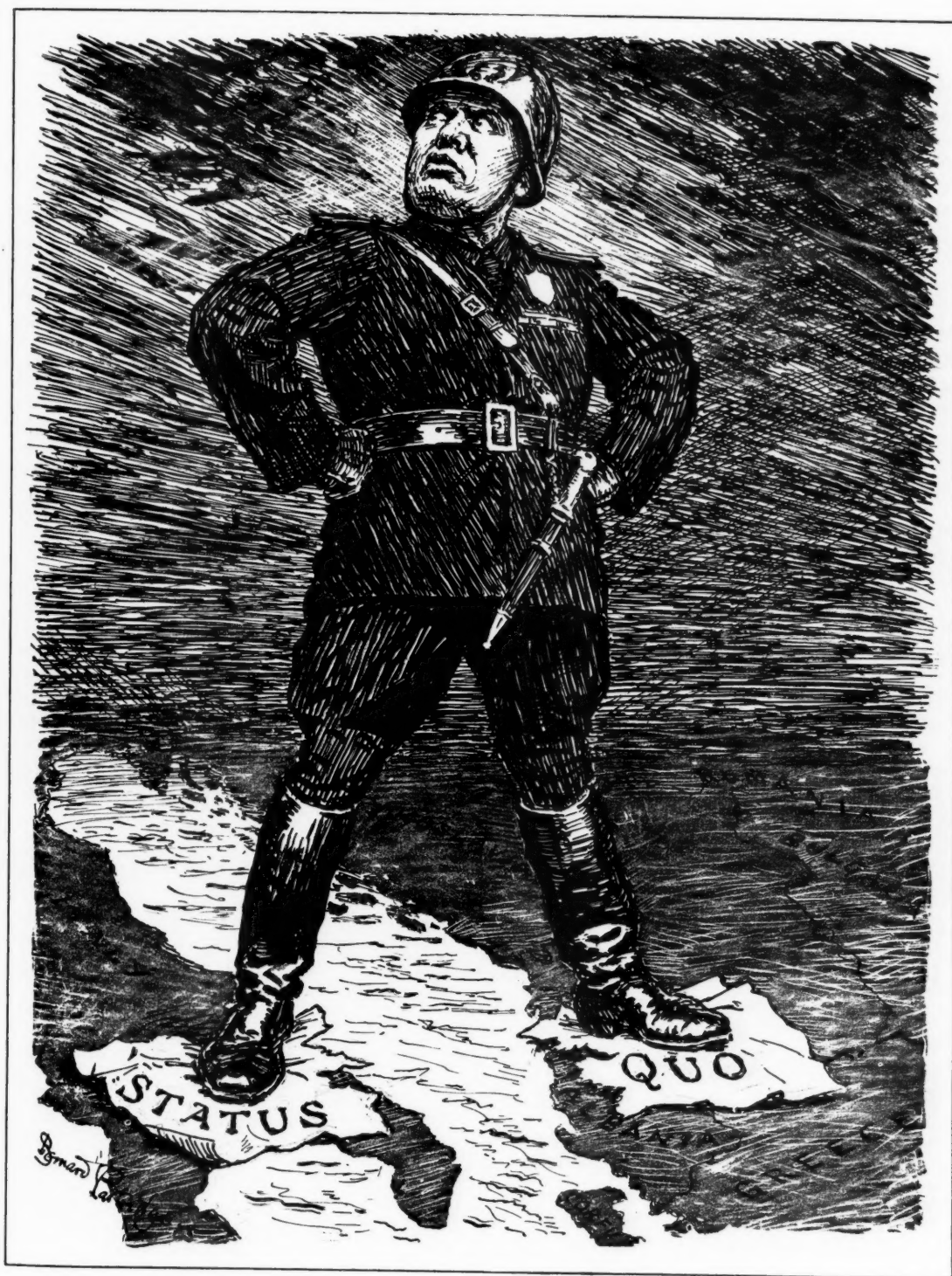
But, as for any sign of zeal,
Never a hope.

Yet now may nobler moods be seen
And this world's record still may
rouse

Some latent spark of prowess e'en
In you, O cows.

For me, I hold it higher worth
Than tons of milk of finest grade
To know that she's of English birth
And British Made.

And though we cease to rule the wave
Still we may feel the ancient fire
With George's banner flaunting brave
O'er Cherry's byre. DUM-DUM.



THE COLOSSUS OF OATHS

"I shan't go any further—I was only stretching my legs."

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"I wish he didn't look so like dear Uncle Richard."

The Papers

"TO speak the truth to you," Mrs. Mills said, "I never do read a newspaper, not from one year's end to another. It always seems to me I've something better to do."

"I try hard not to," I said enviously, "but they keep lying around the place, and one glances at them."

"Not but what I don't use them," Mrs. Mills went on. "I always 'ave one spread on the table when I'm doin' the vegetables or the silver, and I do see a bit that way now and again. There'll be a piece about 'ow they're gettin' ready to blow up—and then there's the potato-peelin's or me polishin'-cloth layin' right over the rest of it, so of course I never know what it's all about."

"No more does anyone," I said gloomily.

"The paper the cat's fish come in yesterday said just by the fish's 'ead that there's over ten thousand spies in someone's pay; but the Someone was right under the fish, and pussy put 'er foot down on where the spies was, so there you are."

"You wouldn't move the fish?" I suggested.

"Not me," Mrs. Mills returned simply. "I've me 'ands full as it is. Mills, now, 'e'll bring a newspaper 'ome and read it right through of an evenin', but I never seen that it done 'im any good. And don't they clutter up the place! If there's anything makes a nouse look unsightly to my mind, it's these newspapers." Her glance flickered over my desk.

"Loathsome!" I agreed, folding back a leading article

with a shudder. "But they keep putting them on the front step, and April, as the poet says, comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers, and one goes on hoping . . ."

"Well, I dare say it's all right for them that likes it," Mrs. Mills conceded, shaking her duster vigorously out of the window. "But give me a good job of work, I say. There's nothing like work if you're feelin' low."

"There's work and work," I returned sadly. "And you know what mine is."

"Fingerin' on that typin' machine, isn't it, 'm?"

"Writing things," I confessed, "for newspapers."

o o

Local Views

THE Vicar (and no one could be more consistently kind) Says: "It's not the idea of Dictatorship I object to so much as the triumph of Matter over Mind."

Mr. Trug, head-gardener up at the Hall, Says: "They'd better not be getting up to any of their tricks afore my asparagus is cut, that's all."

Albert Brown (a poacher of more than parochial fame) Says: "Mark my words, Hitler won't get no good out of pinchin' Czecho-what's-its-name."

The local ladies' and gents' hairdresser, Mr. Nape, Says: "I wouldn't trust anyone, I wouldn't, with a moustache that shape."

And Mrs. Smith of the village stores (everything from stamps to cheese)

Says: "Those foreign folk put me in mind of them big blue-bottles in the shop—all of a buzz and a tease."



"What a very striking bat, dear! Is it to do with A.R.P.?"

Jeu d'Esprit

OF all the games ever crammed by the Trevors down the throats of their unwilling guests this one was about the worst—though on second thoughts one must except the time they made us all play "Truth," and that wasn't so much a game as an extremely serious Incident, of which the repercussions are sometimes felt to this very day in Little-Fiddle-on-the-Green.

"This," Mrs. Trevor said, "is the greatest fun in the world"—and Charles and Uncle Egbert made straight for the door, but were beaten to it by Canon Pramm and the Admiral. And

Mrs. Trevor had pretty evidently foreseen something of the kind, because her husband met them in the hall and turned them all straight back again. They all made a second sortie two minutes later, reinforced by Miss Plum, Cousin Florence and poor Miss Flagge, when Mrs. Trevor said that two of the party must go outside—and again they all had to come in again.

"Let me explain," said Mrs. Trevor, seeming pained but not discouraged. "Presently—not now—two of you will go out, and the rest of us will think of a subject you must discuss when you come in again."

"The European situation," said Aunt Emma without a second's hesitation.

"We shall all think of two well-known quotations—one for each of you, which you will be told privately—and whichever of you first introduces his quotation in a relevant manner into the discussion will have won. I suggest," Mrs. Trevor said, raking in her cowering guests with a relentless eye, "that—let me see—Charles and Miss Dodge should see what they can do."

"The subject of your discussion will be Rugby Football," said Mrs. Trevor in a clear inflexible voice as Miss Dodge sat down on the extreme edge of the piano-stool within three inches of Charles, poised on a small gilt chair opposite.

"What-do-you-think-about-Rugby-Football-personally-I-always-feel-let-sleeping-dogs-lie," screamed Miss Dodge without one second's hesitation.

The Trevors said that they thought she hadn't quite understood what was meant by *relevance*, and wouldn't it be better to start the game afresh?

Charles said very emphatically that it would, and out they went again, and as Charles opened the door one distinctly heard him muttering that his something-or-others were gleaming with purple and gold. So that he'd evidently grasped the elements of the thing.

"Let them talk about gardening," said Cousin Florence wistfully, and she continued to gaze out of the window at the pelargoniums in the garden with the same very sad expression, whilst the Trevors—practically unaided by anybody—decided on two quotations and privately apportioned one to each player.

This time it was Charles, quelling Miss Dodge with a fearful look, who began. Except that he shouted rather than spoke, one would hardly have known that it wasn't an ordinary tea-table conversation.

"Do you like rock-gardens, Miss Dodge? I always think they mean a tremendous amount of work, but the results are absolutely worth it. I remember once when I'd planted hundreds of little—"

Miss Dodge, evidently realising all too well that this was the beginning of Charles' life-history, broke in quite frenziedly and on a really remarkably high note, quite unlike anything that one ever before supposed to be within her compass.

"Gardening," she screamed, "is all very well in its place, which is, after all, the garden. But gardens can be

made use of in so many ways, I always feel——"

"Yes, indeed—used *and* abused," Charles shouted rapidly, "and if——"

"Personally, I *act* plays in my garden," screeched Miss Dodge at a positively terrifying speed. "And that's why I always say——"

Charles, now lost to all civilised ways, bellowed to her to stop and answer his question.

"What question?" yelled Miss Dodge with spirit. "I was just going to tell you——"

"I was just going to ask you if you ever went and deliberately destroyed early crocuses and things in the garden. No," said Charles rapidly, "you never do, because——"

"Because," shrieked Miss Dodge—and she sprang up and down on her stool in a way that made one tremble—"because I'm always busy producing pastoral plays and things—feeling as I do that——"

{ "Bird thou never wert!"

} "All the world's a stage!"

It was, Mrs. Trevor said, a draw—or, as others put it, both Charles and Miss Dodge had made such an infernal row that nobody could make out which of them had got it out first.

Uncle Egbert and Cousin Florence, though far less noisy, were scarcely more successful. Told to hold a discussion on the subject of *Cosmetics*, Cousin Florence at once said that that was very easy, and whenever she looked round her at all the painted faces—here she rather unfortunately looked round her at Canon Pramm, the Admiral and young Cyril Pledge—she always felt that *All the World's a Stage*.

So while the Trevors were reminding her that *that* quotation belonged to the previous effort and that hers was something quite different, Uncle Egbert, with quiet triumph in his tones, was assuring us that a mouth like a pillar-box and a nose straight out of the flour-bin never got a girl anywhere yet, and more often than not sent their parents sorrowing to the grave, and it was frequently a case of full fathoms five their fathers lay.

The discussion that followed this—if discussion it could be called—lasted so long that it was within the bounds of politeness to say that, delightful as the evening had been, it was time to go.

Mrs. Trevor, however, made a final effort, and dispatched Mrs. Battlegate and Mr. Trevor outside the door.

"Let us," she said winningly, "ask them to discuss *Communism*."

"Most certainly not!" said the General suddenly and strongly—and



"'Arf-a-mo, Alfred—it may be a trap.'"

Mrs. Pledge put her hand on her son Cyril's shoulder and one clearly heard her reminding him that General Battlegate was a very old man and had better not be upset for fear of a stroke.

"Then," said Mrs. Trevor, with less *joie de vivre* but more good sense, "they shall talk about *Friendship*. What could be more appropriate?"

As a matter of fact the quotations could be—and were.

"I understand, Mr. Trevor, that you are a man of many friends," Mrs. Battlegate said commandingly, "and that you entertain a great deal. Am I correct?"

"Perfectly, Mrs. Battlegate. And

you, I believe, are on friendly terms with practically everybody in the neighbourhood. May I ask——"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Battlegate rapidly. "But first let me inquire whether you don't find all this entertaining rather hard work? One might even say——"

Before one had quite said it Mr. Trevor had broken in at racing speed.

"And yet in your case, Mrs. Battlegate, I feel sure that the predominant feeling must be——"

"That there's no place like home," Mrs. Battlegate cried, snatching the words out of her host's mouth.

Nobody contradicted her—not even the Trevors.

E. M. D.

Letters From a Gunner

XI

MY DEAR MOTHER,—To a female perhaps shopping has lost its romance. To me, to whom shopping has hitherto meant nothing more than the occasional purchase of a pair of socks and the annual ordeal of choosing Christmas presents, an instruction to buy a uniform and the gift of forty pounds with which to do it were as wine to the innocent. A lifetime of caution, a thousand inhibitions against extravagance vanished in a flood of self-indulgence. All that remained was a hollow mask of professional discretion which occasionally prompted me to say, "We ought to be able to save a bit on that."

Messrs. Grandison, Godolphin & Co. are men in a thousand. Their shop, lying a little to the east of Regent Street, is not exactly pretentious. "Gentlemen's Clothing," it said. "Naval, Military and Civil Outfitters." The "Civil" is an understatement; they were almost overwhelming.

I gazed at the window for some time. A dignified model held himself very erect in the dress uniform of the Royal Air Force. Not quite my choice perhaps. The striped belt is a little undignified. All it needed was a coiled snake fastening and I was back at my prep. school getting ready for the nets. The model's twin brother had joined the Navy when very young, for at the age of barely thirty he had already reached Admiral's rank—whether Rear, Vice or Full Admiral of the Blue I am not knowledgeable enough to say. In the next window stood an elder brother—already a Bishop, in full walking-out regalia. A cousin (fair-haired, but the family nose was unmistakable) was clearly the black sheep of the family. He stood jauntily in jodhpurs, a canary sweater and a loud check coat—the kind of man who lives from point-to-point and perhaps makes good in Kenya, but nowhere nearer. Raising my hat, I walked reverently inside and asked timidly for the Uniform Department.

My way then led up a narrow winding stair lined with show-cases. Had not a very dignified gentleman

(Mr. Grandison himself perhaps?) been with me I should have lingered for hours. Swords *en masse*. A whole case of cocked hats. Another with one solitary exhibit—just a Privy Councillor's full-dress magnificence (thoughtfully labelled). No wonder they are called Right Honourable. "Your Encrusted Highness" would be even more appropriate.

And then the Uniform Department and Claude. (I am certain he has an "e" on the end.)

To Claude all men are equal. In their underclothes they are blank canvas in the R.A.'s studio—one sheet

me see. We have—yes—this has just come back from Major X of the 179th—they're the Royal Flints now of course. The Major's putting on weight, I fear. I always told him it was a mistake to give up polo."

I draped Major X's former tunic round myself. Claude shook his head.

"No, Sir. I can't recommend that. Ah, here's the very thing. Back from our film department this morning."

I have that tunic. I shall always have that tunic. It needs alteration; the sleeves are too long and the neck too tight, but—

Frankly it was the medal ribbons.

Two rows of them, all entirely fictitious. Two rows of flaming colour, two rows of gallantry and/or influence.

Even Claude smiled gently.

"Pity they'll have to come off, Sir," he said.

I sighed. Still, I have had my moment.

The rest was sheer anticlimax. I ordered trousers and boots, a blue patrol jacket and overalls (the overalls are skin-tight trousers that would hardly go over a silk stocking, let alone everything else), a khaki cap and a blue cap and finally a greatcoat. The greatcoat cheered me a little. There was a faint flavour of *The Prisoner of Zenda* about it.

But I sighed for the ribbons.

I inquired the name of the film, and to-morrow evening I go to see my new tunic, worn by men who are men—men who have made and saved an Empire, men whose names are household words in Pinewood,

Denham and perhaps even in far-flung California.

United Artists, here I come!

Your loving Son,
HAROLD.

○ ○

"CARS AS AMBULANCES
ADAPTABLE BODIES SUGGESTED."

The Scotsman.

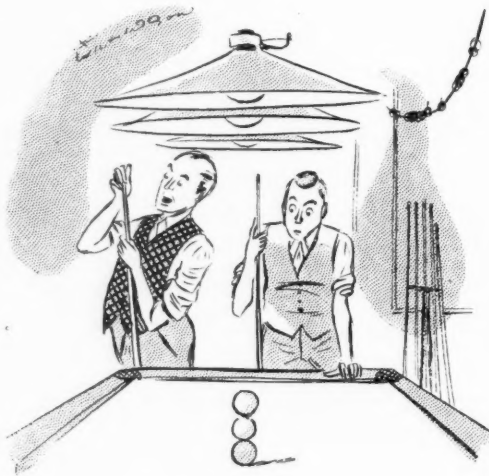
No, no; they must take us as they find us.

○ ○

"DAY-OLD BABY IN PHONE BOX."

Sunday Pictorial.

You never know with Button B, do you!



"Your turn."

to rise to the Academy as "Cattle Drinking on a Misty Evening in the Highlands," its neighbour to sink to "Councillor W. J. Boole, Charter Mayor of Crumpington."

Claude looked at me.

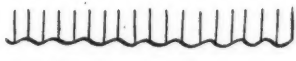
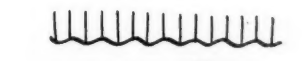
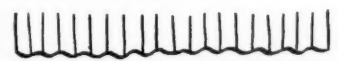
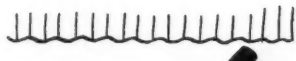
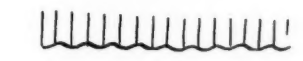
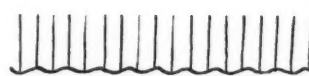
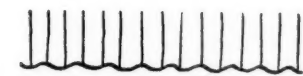
"What regiment, Sir?" he asked kindly.

"Royal Artillery," I replied.

"Ah, yes. Let us look at the second-hand department."

I must say I was disconcerted. I had, in fact, intended to hint at such an intention later in the interview but—Happily Claude knew how to soothe me.

"No point in wasting money, is there, Sir?" he said brightly. "Let



DAVID ANTON



"I can't serve you."
 "Well, fetch the bloke as can."

Looking Ahead

THERE were three of us in the railway carriage—a stout, middle-aged, slightly pompous man whom I knew by sight, a rather pleasant-looking young man and myself. And presently the young man looked at me and said:

"I say, excuse me, but could you tell me the time?"

"Sorry," I answered. "Watch has stopped."

"Oh—thanks!" He turned to the

middle-aged man. "Pardon me, Sir, but could you tell me the time?"

The other did not answer. He did not even look up from his paper. The young man blushed a rich red and gazed fiercely out of the window. For some miles we travelled in silence.

Then the young man, who seemed to be getting restive, forgot his rebuff and repeated his question. Its reception was exactly the same as before. The young man's colour exceeded its former

efforts. He returned to his window. The miles flew past.

But something was on his mind. He glared at his ticket. I saw it was for Grenton, my own station. I gathered that he had doubts about the train's punctuality. He blushed once more, this time in advance, indulged in five rapid gulps and leaned over to the middle-aged man yet again.

"I really am sorry to trouble you, Sir," he said, "but I'd be so grateful if you could tell me the time."

Still silence. The middle-aged man gave no indication that he knew he had been addressed. The young man coughed embarrassedly and reverted to his window. And all was peace until, some while later, the stout man put down his paper, settled his glasses more firmly on his nose, regarded the other severely and said:

"Young man, you have asked me the time on three occasions and I gave you no answer. You must have thought me either very rude or very deaf. As a matter of fact I am neither. I am, however, a man of vision. I can look ahead. Suppose I had answered your question—what would have happened? You would have thanked me. Possibly you would have offered me a cigarette, which I should have accepted. We should have fallen into conversation. You are obviously a young man of charm and intelligence. Myself, I have the reputation of being interesting company. We should have got along together extremely well."

The young man stirred, but the elder impressively waved him to be quiet.

"I perceive you have booked to Grenton, where I myself live. By the time we reached Grenton we should each have conceived some regard for the other and should have been reluctant to part. I should have said, 'Suppose we go into the Station Hotel for a drink?' You would have said, 'Delighted, Sir.' We should have gone into the Station Hotel and I should have bought drinks. When we had finished them you would have said, 'You'll have one with me, won't you?' I should have been forced to say, 'I am very sorry, but my wife is expecting me. I'll tell you what. I live only just down the road—why don't you look in with me and have a quick drink at home?' You would have agreed. We should have gone to my home. I should have introduced you to my wife, who would, I may say, have taken a liking to you at once. Without question she would have suggested that you remained to dinner with us. Again you would have said you would be delighted. You follow me?"

The young man nodded feebly. I think his voice was temporarily out of commission. The other went on:

"At dinner you would have met my daughter. She is a girl of culture and looks. You would have chatted politely with her about this and that, finding many interests in common. You would have discovered you shared similar tastes in literature. When you finally departed she would have lent you a book which, two days later, you would not have scrupled to return in person, thus renewing your acquaintanceship with her. Possibly you would in turn have lent her a book yourself. You would have discussed those books together. From books you would have turned to the arts in general. The theatre would have been introduced. What more natural than that you should then propose a visit to the theatre? That visit to the theatre would have been but the beginning of things. There would have been dances, cinemas, walks and drives. You would have conceived a high admiration for my daughter, which she would have reciprocated."

The speaker paused as the train began to lose speed. He continued:

"In due course, beyond all question, you would have come to me and said, 'Sir, I beg to tell you that your daughter has done me the honour to consent to be my wife.'"

The train halted. We had reached Grenton. The middle-aged man opened the door, alighted, and turned to conduct his remarks from the platform.

"You wondered why I did not answer when you asked me the time. Do you think, young man—do you honestly suppose that I, an affectionate and dutiful father, wish to see my daughter married to a man who cannot even afford to buy a watch of his own? Good-night!"

HE was gone. The young man and I were both getting out at Grenton, but for the moment he did not seem able to move. Then he drew a long breath and laughed shakily.

"Gosh!" he said. "I—I never heard such ridiculous nonsense! Why, I don't suppose he's even got a daughter!"

"Oh, he's got a daughter all right," I answered—"but he hasn't got a watch."

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Diplomat's French

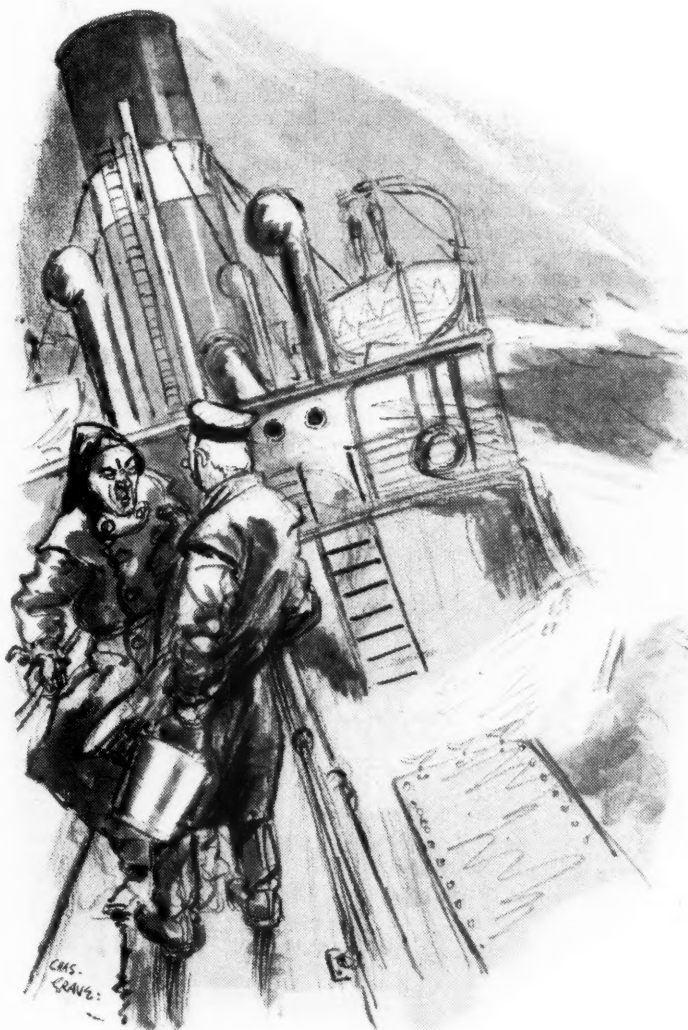
"Diplomacy is made by chatting," is his creed. Master of the French tongue he has coined many diplomatic terms in that language such as 'Nothing about us without us.'—*West-Country Paper*.

Resurrection, 1939

["The Highest and Ultimate Salvation Lies in the Sword."—*Motto of the First Section of the 19th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment of the German Air Force.*]

FROM the sword's point there rises
All that the sword would slay.
Nations, Dictators, Communes, Kings
Last for a day;
Power, Conquest, Terror, War—
These are not Ultimate Things,
For these decay.

Out of the fire the Phoenix:
The Spirit from the Slain:
Out of defeat the purpose pure
Rises again.
Love, Wisdom, Justice, Faith—
These are the things that endure;
And these remain.



"I'll never be really 'appy till I've shaken the dust of this ship off me feet."

Pages From My Life

The Home for Lost Horses

I AM not, nor have I ever claimed to be, an enigma. But even those who know me best must often have wondered why whenever I see a horse in the street I raise my hat. I think the time has come now to rend the veil, to reveal the fact that it is not to any particular horse or horses that I raise my hat, but to the memory of a devoted friend.

Since I left my native Doomshire for wider spheres in the '80's I had quite lost touch with my family. Except for an occasional exchange of anonymous letters we had held no communication for over forty years. By the year 1929 I had good reason to suppose that all my surviving relatives were dead. I was amazed therefore to receive one morning a letter from a firm of solicitors, Messrs. Timms and Gallowglass, informing me that my uncle, Mr. Humbert Nogginson, had recently died and requesting me as the sole beneficiary under his will to call on them as soon as possible.

So Uncle Humbert was dead. It seemed impossible. And yet even when I last saw him, round about the year 1885, he had been an old man. He must have been even older at the time of his death, I thought to myself as I laid the letter down. I gulped back

a sigh. I remembered Uncle Humbert well. He had been something of an eccentric in his day and had often dandled me on his knee when I was a little boy. He had had what is known as an adventurous life, and I never tired of listening to his stories of how he had ridden in one of the first steam-trams in Liverpool, or how in defiance of public opinion he had had the front-door of his house in Macclesfield painted mauve. He was rather fond of horses, too, I remembered—his two hunters, Steam Hammer and Gum Arabic, were always kept tethered in his sitting-room and generally sat down with him at table. There was a tradition in my family that a horse had once saved my uncle's life or else that he had once saved a horse's life, I forget precisely which. In any case the principle is the same.

I never guessed that my uncle's interest in matters equine (to use his own witty phrase) was destined to divert the whole current of my life. But now came a bolt from the blue. When I interviewed the lawyer next day I heard with mixed feelings that my uncle had left me his entire fortune, but on two conditions: firstly that I should change my name by deed-poll to Horse, and secondly that I

should found a home to be called the Humbert Nogginson Memorial Home for Lost Horses.

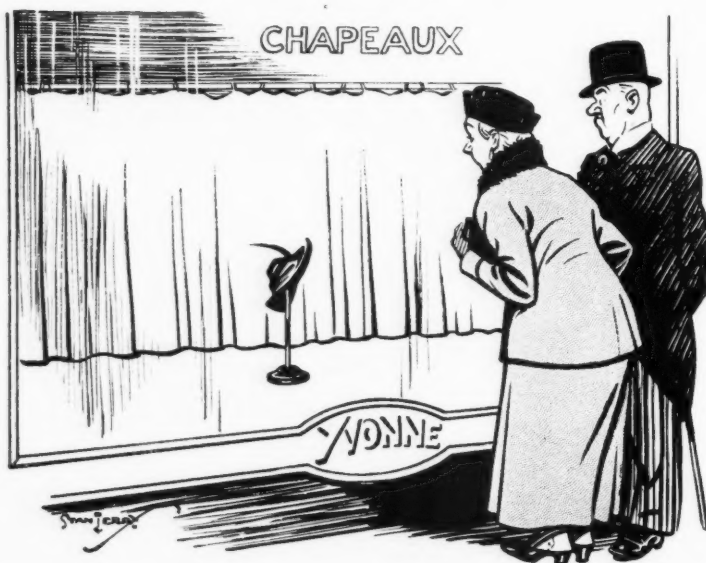
I left the lawyer's office in two minds. Personal pride struggled against respect for my uncle's memory. "Can I go through with this thing?" asked Personal Pride. "You must," answered Respect for my uncle's memory. And then, as Personal Pride seemed unconvinced, Respect added in a rather unpleasant tone, "Besides, you fool, you need the money." In this dilemma it was only natural that I should consult Dr. Nightbell, my oldest and dearest friend.

To my surprise the Doctor seemed full of enthusiasm for the project. As he was now over a hundred years old he had just given up his practice and was, as he put it, rather at a loose end. In spite of his advanced age his knowledge of medicine was as negligible as ever and he would be proud, he said, to put it at the disposal of so noble a cause. He was a horse-lover himself. As a student he had been the only man of his year who could spell "veterinary surgeon" correctly at the first attempt, and he believed that if necessary he could still do it.

To be brief, the Doctor carried the day. Within a month the Home was in being. We rented an old shooting-gallery in Hampstead; half of it we filled with straw and partitioned off into loose-boxes, the other half we kept as a combined billiard-room, office and dormitory. Nothing remained now but to await the first poor wanderer who should come tapping with timid hoof at our door.

I am ashamed to say now that at first I took a somewhat cynical view of the whole business. The Doctor, with his greater age and experience, often had occasion to rebuke me for my frivolous attitude, and once, when for a joke I entered the building on all fours, neighing loudly, he would not speak to me for a whole week. But as time went on and still no lost horse made its appearance my feelings began to change. Would no horse ever come? Was I failing in my duty to my uncle's memory? As I tramped round the empty loose-boxes or thrust my head into the untouched buckets of oats these persistent questions assailed me. The Doctor noted with growing concern that I was becoming careworn and melancholy.

Yet we did not give up all hope. We no longer went to bed now, lest the longed-for summons should find us sleeping. By the light of a stable-lantern we kept ceaseless vigil, whiling away the hours of waiting in our own separate employments. The Doctor,



"Baint much choice, Martha!"



"Yes, it is cold, Mrs. Brown, but you are an hour earlier this morning, remember."
 "Lor, Mum, but that was yesterday!"

for instance, spent much of his time in making out prescriptions at random out of his head, and it was a common thing for me to come on him stretched out on the floor apparently lifeless from a dose of his own medicine. Such accidents gave a tinge of humour to an existence which was otherwise one of unrelieved gloom.

A year passed and our hopes were fading. One dull November afternoon I sat by myself in the Home idly sawing off the legs of the billiard-table and wondering whether life (or anything else for that matter) were worth

living. The Doctor had gone out, as he said, to buy some tobacco. He had already been away two hours. And then as I sat there I heard a faint sound at the door. It was like a muffled neigh.

In one bound I was at the door. Peering through the fog I saw a small and very old grey horse. Not merely was he manifestly lost, but by his tottering gait and vacant eye he seemed on the very point of expiring. With a joyful cry I led him indoors. He leaned heavily against me. But at that moment I saw something

which made me suspicious. Round the horse's neck was a blue-and-yellow spotted bow-tie. It was one I recognised as the Doctor's. I looked more closely and saw that this horse had a wooden leg. Through a rent in his hide I caught a glimpse of an evening paper.

The Doctor had done this for me! It was too much! My heart was too full for words. I could not bring myself to let him see that his well-meant deception had failed. I turned round and without a word left the Nogginson Memorial Home behind me for ever.



"That loose wire I was telling you about has just come right off, Operator."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Youth Under Hatches

FROM the average reader's point of view it is disconcerting to be introduced to a contemporary historical movement—let alone contemporary historical personages—under the guise of fiction. The first and third parts of Miss PEARL BUCK's new story—which educate a young Chinese revolutionary and bring him back from exile in Japan to fight for CHIANG KAI-SHEK—are perhaps rather informative for a novel and definitely uncheckable as history. The middle chapters of *The Patriot* (METHUEN, 8/6), which show the banished *I-wan* wooing his *Tama* in her home at Nagasaki, are an enchanting interlude: and this although the union of these two ardent young people is threatened both from within and without. Youth is not at the helm either in China or Japan. How can it manage to carry over the best of the old world into the sorely-needed construction of a new? To this problem, at once so universal and so personal, Miss BUCK undoubtedly supplies the hint of an answer; and to watch so gallant, so sincere and so charming a pair as her lovers face a world of destroyers and opportunists is a pleasure as notable as it is rare.

The Tragic Disciple

It is a far cry from *Juan in America* to *Judas* (CAPE, 6/-) in Jerusalem, but Mr. ERIC LINKLATER is one of those rare and refreshing authors who are not content to write the same book over and over again. In this brief novel based on the events of Holy Week he has done something quite

new and very memorable. It is true that there is humour in it, as in the portrait of *Caiaphas*, whose unctuous platitudes recall how many an elder statesman of our time, and in that of *Phanuel*, the worldly-wise uncle exercising tact on a wrong-headed nephew; but the analysis of the character of the disciple who betrayed his Master is as serious as it is original. *Judas*, as Mr. LINKLATER sees him, is a weakling who has embraced and shrinks from a destiny too great for him; a man of property outraged by the thought that the established order and his household gods may be destroyed; a coward terrified by the imminence of strife. This reading is supported by a series of ingeniously invented but always plausible episodes, and the inner conflict, the specious arguments and self-justifications of this unhappy victim of a temperament are presented with mastery. The subsidiary characters, notably a boldly conceived *Mary of Magdala*, are equally convincing; and although Mr. LINKLATER has aimed at no exact local colour, rendering speech in the modern vernacular, he makes us aware in all our senses of the excited throngs in street and temple court.

Murder in Pall Mall

A rather horrible *cause célèbre* is a subject made to GEORGE R. PREEDY's hand, yet perhaps the mysterious murder of THYNNE of Longleat—which took place in 1683, in Pall Mall, in the unsuspecting victim's own coach—has not quite justified its choice as the catastrophe of *The Fair Young Widow* (JENKINS, 7/6). This was, if not an unprecedented, an apparently wanton crime; for THYNNE was a wealthy and genial supporter of the then popular



"Yes! Kensington Gardens again! Any objections?"



Old Lady (to Conductor—her first drive on an electric tram). "WOULD IT BE DANGEROUS, CONDUCTOR, IF I WAS TO PUT MY FOOT ON THE RAIL?"

Conductor (an Edison manqué). "NO, MUM, NOT UNLESS YOU WAS TO PUT THE OTHER ONE ON THE OVERHEAD WIRE!"

C. Shepperson, April 22nd, 1908.

MONMOUTH, and there seemed no particular reason why he should have been set on by a Pomeranian, a Swede and a Pole save that these bravos had come to England in the train of Count JOHN CHARLES KOENIGSMARK, whose matrimonial projects THYNNE had deliberately crossed. KOENIGSMARK'S revolting but rather childishy-handled *diablerie*, the unprepossessing character of the heiress for whose fortune he competes with THYNNE, the unpleasantness of the English court and of the KOENIGSMARKS' "ogre's castle" in Sweden furnish a cast almost exclusively villainous. But one can hardly forgive the author for introducing DOROTHY OSBORNE as the middle-aged Lady

TEMPLE, and depicting her as a trite if well-meaning matron with no trace of her epistolary charm.

Mass Destruction

"When I look at that bunch on the line—bell bottom pants, slick hair, twisted brains, and weak faces—I think to myself, this is the age of automatics and small men." This extract from *F.O.B. Detroit* (DENT, 7/6) is the essence of the novel, which tells how a lumberman is driven by desperate unemployment to work in a mass-production motor-car factory, and how his soul revolts against the

monotony of it and the petty tyranny. *Russ* is drawn with strength by Mr. WESSEL SMITTER, his author, and it is an original idea to make him, the giant from out-of-doors, the one who is not taken in for a moment by the pretentious sales-philosophy of his employer, while his city-bred friend, who tells the story, is easily humbugged by nonsense about the ineffable beauty of labour and the sanctity of the machine. The book gives a very vivid picture of a huge American plant, and its story carries one along to a conclusion moving in its tragedy.

Self-Detachment

The "double" who appears in the title and *passim* in the pages of Mr. NIKOLAI GUBSKY'S *My Double and I* (HEINEMANN, 10/6) is a kind of second self whom he summons at moments of nervous crisis, and under whose detached scrutiny anger, fear and depression wilt and disappear. The book, which is a sequel to his autobiography, *Angry Dust*, begins with the author on the way to Houston, Texas, by tramp steamer; his admiration and respect for the seamen are easy to share. From Houston he travels by bus to Mexico to revisit an old love, and stays there some time; then home to London, where (the book's sub-title is "Sentimental Adventures") he falls in love again. He is, in the usual phrase, "amazingly frank" about this affair, but the emphasis is nearly always, apart from his straightforward and very entertaining account of muddled conditions in Mexico, on the system of self-detachment: his "double" is seen in action whenever anything disturbs him. To judge from these pages the system is very successful, and becomes more so with practice. An original, stimulating, informative book.



"Please, something which won't make me think."

Down on the Collective Farm

And Then the Harvest (PUTNAM, 8/6) is a large muddled book in which the dialogue has not been happily translated, but it is of interest as a novel about modern Russia by an author who is himself one of her agricultural organisers. Comrade FIODOR PANFEROV would see fertility in a clothes-peg. His characters are painfully conscious of the earth as a teeming mother, and when spring brings its fresh romance to the collective farm it is time for the sensitive reader to put on his dark spectacles. What is striking in the book is the picture of the young Russian worker of to-day. Both sexes are unbelievably earnest about the machine and its power to put their revolution on a sound footing. Whether it is cutting peat or building furnaces, or flying still further in an aeroplane, their task is treated as a crusade. Competition seems to play so great a part in

production that the girl whose tractor ploughs most land is as resounding a national heroine as if in this country she had swept the board at Wimbledon. STALIN appears as a kindly pipe-smoker, and there are some vivid sketches of typical officials. Commissars certainly work hard, but they now do themselves very well, with country houses and long fast motor-cars.

Civilisation v. Barbarism

Mr. LEWIS MUMFORD thumps his tub with vigour. He speaks out in no uncertain voice—American and strident. For "the international night darkens. The chill of a merciless reality by now has penetrated the meekest spines." And how he lashes our too meek spines from across the Atlantic! The unfortunate Prime Ministers of France and Britain stand shivering at the bar, transfixed

by the cold grey eye of the author of *Men Must Act* (SECKER AND WARBURG, 3/6). They are cowards, vassals, traitors, "completely demoralised," "jackals to the snarling Nazi lion." He confesses himself unable to determine "which was more offensive to human dignity: the doggish fear in their eyes or the propitiating wag of their tails." MM. DALADIER and CHAMBERLAIN have been so soundly belaboured of late by various authors that presumably they are now tolerably insensitive. What with *Fallen Bastions*, *Disgrace Abounding* and the like, they have recently had more brickbats thrown at them than bouquets, but not even Mr. GEDYE or Mr. DOUGLAS REED went quite so far as our American friend. It seems a pity that Mr.

MUMFORD should have thought this violence of language necessary to his cause. He urges in effect a boycott of the Nazi and Fascist countries. "Democracy Must Dare!" he shouts in his final chapter. But it need not begin by vilifying its supporters.

A Mystery Man

Anyone who has already made the acquaintance of Mr. JOHN P. MARQUAND'S Japanese secret-service official will find him even more urbane and relentless in *Mr. Moto is So Sorry* (ROBERT HALE, 7/6). Two young Americans, *Calvin Gates* and *Miss Dillaway*, were travelling from Japan to Inner Mongolia when, willy-nilly, they found themselves involved in important affairs. A cigarette-case which was conveying a message in code to the Russians came into the possession of *Miss Dillaway* and from that moment both she and *Gates* were in a prominent and precarious position. Mr. MARQUAND is successful in contrasting the robust methods of the Russian agent with the subtle devices of *Mr. Moto*, and an atmosphere of inevitability is vividly conveyed.

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